

# FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

INTERIOR | JANUARY - DECEMBER 2025



The unregulated drug supply in BC remains highly potent, unpredictable, and dangerous. First Nations individuals, families, and communities continue to be disproportionately affected by the toxic drug crisis. Harm reduction is saving lives by offering compassionate, accessible health services to people who use substances, wherever they are on their healing journey. A First Nations approach strengthens conventional harm reduction by weaving in culture, teachings, community, and connections to the land and one another.

*The data presented here is specific to the Interior Region.*

Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Of First Nations People

53

↓ 22.1%  
Decrease from 2024

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE DIED FROM TOXIC DRUG POISONINGS IN 2025.

This is a 22.1% decrease from the 68 deaths in 2024.

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Involving First Nations People

4.2x

First Nations people experienced a death rate 4.2x higher than other residents of the region in 2025.

Deaths of First Nations People BY SEX

♂ 77.4%  
Male

♀ 22.6%  
Female

Deaths of First Nations People BY AGE

64.2%  
40 Years and Older

35.8%  
Younger than 40

First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths

4.5%

First Nations people make up 4.5% of the region's population.

16.5%

16.5% of toxic drug poisoning deaths in 2025 were First Nations people.



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

*This data includes only Status First Nations people and their status-eligible descendants. Additionally, our data is limited to biological sex at birth, which may misidentify two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, intersex, and gender diverse people. Surveillance data is dynamic and subject to change with new information and historical corrections.*

The FNHA gratefully acknowledges the health partners that make this data available: BC Centre for Disease Control, BC Coroners Service, BC Emergency Health Services, and the BC Ministry of Health.

You may find this information distressing. Cultural support is available at Tsow Tun Le Lum Society. Call 1-888-403-3123 (toll-free) or visit [www.tsowtunlelum.org](http://www.tsowtunlelum.org)



**Toxic Drug Poisoning Events Involving First Nations People**

**467**



**TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN 2025.**

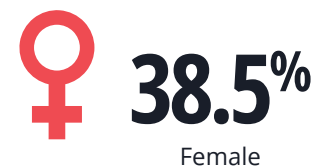
**This is a 22.8% decrease from the 605 events experienced in 2024.**

**Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Events Involving First Nations People**

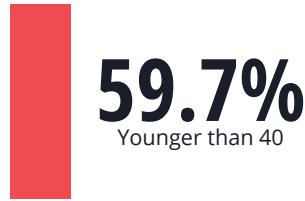
**4.4x**

First Nations people experienced an event rate 4.4x higher than other residents of the region in 2025.

**Events of First Nations People BY SEX**



**Events of First Nations People BY AGE**



**First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in Toxic Drug Poisoning Events**

**4.5%**

**First Nations people make up 4.5% of the region's population.**

**18.8%**

**18.8%** of toxic drug poisoning events in 2025 were First Nations people.

**NOTES**

- Most toxic drug poisoning events are non-fatal and represent instances where paramedics were called and responded to a poisoning. Events that were treated successfully in community and events where 9-1-1 was not called are not captured in this data
- Event data is only collected for people with documented BC Personal Health Numbers (PHNs), and is therefore likely an underestimate, due to missing PHNs for some events

**REGIONAL WELLNESS AND CULTURAL SUPPORTS**

**Interior Region Community-Based Crisis Support** – Call 1833-751-2525 (M-F 8am-4pm) or visit [IRSupport@fnha.ca](mailto:IRSupport@fnha.ca)

**Tsow Tun Le Lum Society** – Call 1-888-403-3123 (toll-free) or visit [www.tsowtunlelum.org](http://www.tsowtunlelum.org)

**Indian Residential School Crisis Line** is a national service for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their residential school experience. Call toll-free 1-866-925-4419.

**KUU-US Crisis Service** – Call 1-800-KUU-US17 (588-8717) for an immediate response. 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

**Hope for Wellness Help Line** offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention by phone or online chat. Call toll-free 1-855-242-3310 or start a confidential chat with a counsellor at [www.hopeforwellness.ca](http://www.hopeforwellness.ca)

**Drug Alerts** - Text JOIN to ALERTS (253787)

**Regional contact email**  
[IRSupports@fnha.ca](mailto:IRSupports@fnha.ca)

**Regional FNHA staff**  
**Manager, Interior Region Mental Health and Wellness**  
Debra Robbins

**Regional Addictions Specialists**  
Angela Aspinall  
Vanessa Buonanno

**Regional Crisis Response Lead**  
Storme Sandy

**Mental Health and Wellness Liaison**  
Destiny Dendewicz

**Indigenous Harm Reduction Educator**  
Rocker Brady

**Wellness Systems Navigators**  
Cathy Ballati  
Jennifer du Bourg